

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Southwest Region

Migratory Birds Program

Recommended Buffer Zones for Ground-based Human Activities around Nesting Sites of Golden Eagles in California and Nevada

December 2017

For most ground-based human activities, we recommend a one-mile no-disturbance buffer surrounding golden eagle nesting sites in California and Nevada; see table below for specifics on activity and buffer recommendations. Recommended buffers may increase or decrease depending on specific site or activity circumstances and local jurisdiction recommendations. Buffers may be reduced in consultation with the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) when the nest is not in use or activities are out of line-of-sight of the nest^a. In parts of California, eagles maintain year-round territories that may require additional protection. We recommend consultation with the Service for determining buffer zones for high intensity or long duration activities, unique circumstances, activities not listed in the table below, or when historic levels of human activity are a consideration.

Activity	Recommended No-Disturbance Buffer
Off-Road Passenger Vehicle and Boating Activity: Any passenger vehicle driving off-road, or on dirt or gravel roads, and not part of a routinely used transportation corridor. Also includes motorized boating activities.	1 mile
Small Personal Vehicle Activity: Including, but not limited to, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles.	1 mile
Pedestrian and Non-Motorized Activity: Including, but not limited to, walking, running, hiking, biking, camping, rock climbing, bird watching, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, and biological surveys.	1 mile
Developed Sites: Including, but not limited to, facilities, developed campground sites, and snowmobile and off-road vehicle courses.	1 mile
Industrial, Municipal, and Construction Activity: Including, but not limited to, urbanization; mining; oil and gas development; solar development; logging; power line construction; road construction & maintenance; facilities construction; and agricultural operations.	1 mile
Blasting and other loud non-regular noise: Including, but not limited to, detonation devices, fireworks classified by the Federal Department of Transportation as Class B explosives, recreational shooting, and outdoor concerts.	2 miles

^a An *in-use nest* is defined as a “golden eagle nest characterized by the presence of one of more eggs, dependent young, or adult eagles on the nest in the past 10 days during the breeding season” (50 CFR 22.3) and “(b)reeding begins... with the start of courtship...” (*Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Eagle Rule Revision*, United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, December 2016).